Amendments To The Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1(currently amended) A device for controlling a gas discharge lamp ~~(10)~~ with

- a current supply device ~~(24)~~ for supplying the lamp ~~(10)~~ with an alternating current ~~(IL)~~ of given amplitude,
- and a programming unit ~~(μC)~~ for providing amplitude values to the current supply device ~~(24)~~ during a run-up phase ~~(B1)~~,
- wherein the run-up phase comprises at least the interval from 1 s after ignition of the lamp ~~(10)~~ to 3 s after ignition of the lamp ~~(10)~~, and
- wherein the programming unit ~~(μC)~~ effectuates a substantially rising gradient in time of the current ~~(IL)~~ over ~~during~~ the run-up phase (B1).

Claim 2 (currently amended): A device as claimed in claim 1, wherein the time gradient is chosen such that the luminous flux ~~(L)~~ generated by the lamp ~~(10)~~ achieves at least at two given moments assigned minimum ~~valves~~values.

Claim 3 (canceled)

Claim 4 (currently amended): A device as claimed in claim 1, wherein the current ~~(IL)~~ rises by at least 30% in the run-up phase ~~(B1)~~ with respect to the value at the start of said phase.

Claim 5 (currently amended): A device as claimed in claim 1, wherein the time gradient of the current ~~(IL)~~ in the run-up phase ~~(B1)~~ rises monotonically averaged over time.

Claim 6 (currently amended): A device as claimed in claim 1, wherein the current ~~(IL)~~ is an alternating current with a substantially square-wave characteristic in time and a frequency of at least 200 Hz.

Claim 7 (currently amended): A device as claimed in claim 1, wherein the current ~~(IL)~~ drops to a stationary value in a transition phase ~~(B2)~~ following the run-up phase ~~(B1)~~.

Claim 8 (currently amended): A device as claimed in claim 1, wherein the current ~~(IL)~~ at the start of the run-up phase ~~(B1)~~ amounts to at most 75%~~, preferably less than 60%~~ of the maximum value that the current assumes in the interval after 1 s after ignition.

Claim 9 (canceled)

Claim 10 (canceled)

Claim 11 (currently amended): A method of controlling a gas discharge lamp wherein

- an alternating current ~~(IL)~~ flows through the lamp in a run-up phase ~~(B1)~~ which comprises at least the interval from 1 s after ignition of a lamp ~~(10)~~ to 3 s after ignition of the lamp ~~(10)~~,
- wherein the current ~~(IL)~~ is controlled such that its amplitude rises during said run-up phase, and
- wherein the time gradient of the current ~~(IL)~~ is chosen such that the luminous flux ~~(L)~~ generated by the lamp ~~(10)~~ achieves at at least to two given moments in time ~~(B1)~~ assigned minimum ~~valves~~values.

Claim 12 (new): A device as claimed in claim 8, wherein the current at the start of the run-up phase amounts to at most 60% of the maximum value that the current assumes in the interval after 1 s after ignition.

Claim 13 (new): A device for controlling a gas discharge lamp with

- a current supply device for supplying the lamp with an alternating current of given amplitude,
- and a programming unit for providing amplitude values to the current supply device during a run-up phase,

- wherein the run-up phase comprises at least the interval from 0.5 s after ignition of the lamp to 4 s after ignition of the lamp, and
- wherein the programming unit effectuates a substantially rising gradient in time of the current throughout the run-up phase.

Claim 14 (new): A lighting system with
- a gas discharge lamp
- and a control device
- the control device comprising a current supply device for supplying the lamp with an alternating current of given amplitude, and a programming unit for providing amplitude values to the current supply device during a run-up phase,
- wherein the run-up phase comprises at least the interval from 1 s after ignition of the lamp to 3 s after ignition of the lamp , and
- wherein the programming unit effectuates a substantially rising gradient in time of the current over the run-up phase.

Claim 15 (new): A lighting system as claimed in claim 14, wherein the gas discharge lamp has a filling free from Hg.

Claim 16 (new): A device for controlling a gas discharge lamp with

- a current supply device for supplying the lamp with an alternating current of given amplitude,
- and a programming unit for providing amplitude values to the current supply device during a run-up phase,
- wherein the run-up phase comprises at least the interval from 1 s after ignition of the lamp to 3 s after ignition of the lamp, and
- wherein the programming unit effectuates a substantially rising gradient in time of the current during the run-up phase to a value of the current corresponding to a maximum current admissible for the lamp.

Claim 17 (new): A device for controlling a gas discharge lamp comprising:

- a current supply device supplying the lamp with an alternating current of given amplitude,
- and a programming unit providing amplitude values to the current supply device during a run-up phase,
- wherein the run-up phase comprises the interval from a time after ignition of the lamp at which the lamp is operated with an alternating current to at least 3 s after said time, and
- wherein the programming unit effectuates a substantially rising gradient of the current over the run-up phase.